

Luke 22: 14 – 27 Bread and wine

This meal is surely the most famous meal in human history, retold, relived and painted by the greatest painters in history. Yet it is easy to think we know it, and fail to look into the story telling and reflect on what might challenge us afresh.

The Passover is a most wonderful act of deliverance. It is also the beginning of a journey – one that would take them a very long time. What are the hints in the passage about this being the beginning of a journey?

Jesus' journey is one of suffering and death, whilst the journey of his followers is one of life and going to the promised land. Why are they such different journeys? Why are such different journeys linked?

The first cup (verse 17) is significant because it is a shared cup – one in which they have a part. Why was that an important lesson for the disciples that night? What do we as a church need to learn from that?

If the shared cup is a reminder that we must not leave others behind on the journey, what do we as a church need to learn to do this well? Who are those we might be tempted to leave behind?

Reflection: It is really easy to talk of having a personal relationship with Jesus (which is important) as if that relationship is just about "him and me." What will enable me to grow in my understanding and love for "him and us"?

The imagery of this meal is bread and wine. Bread is an essential part of the staple diet, affordable and available. What does this help us understand about the gospel of grace?

Bread is included in the prayer Jesus teaches us – "give us this day our daily bread." What might this mean beyond meeting our immediate physical needs?

Bread is also an essential part of the feeding miracles that Jesus performed, speaking of the abundance of the God of grace. How does the

abundance of God fit in to our understanding of the Last Supper and “this is my body, broken for you”?

The imagery of wine and blood can be very difficult for people, yet it has a really important Old Testament background. See for example Exodus 24 and the inauguration of the Covenant. Central to this account is the reality and importance of dealing with sin. What else in this passage helps us see that Jesus is dealing with human sin in his death?

Even at this most amazing of meals, there is a squabble over personal gain and significance. How does this emphasise what we most need to learn?

Reflection: The importance of Holiness is rarely talked about in churches. Some fear it is judgemental, others that it leads to exclusiveness. What do you think about the importance of Holiness in your own life? Does it matter or is believing in Jesus all that is required?

Throughout Christian history, Bible teachers have taught about the connection between the Last Supper and our own celebrations of Holy Communion. In what ways do you think this is helpful?

Churches differ about who should be invited to the Lord’s Table. What is your view on this – in terms of age, beliefs, lifestyle? Interestingly (verse 21), Judas, who already has decided in his heart to betray Jesus, is present at the meal. Why didn’t Jesus send him away before they shared the bread and the wine?

What does this teach us about the nature of the Gospel of Grace? What might it be saying about how we journey together as a community?

How do we live alongside and include at our tables those who by their actions, beliefs or lifestyles betray the community of faith? How do we do this in a way that models the Gospel of Grace? How do we do it in a way that means that we do not lose our distinctiveness and clarity as followers of Jesus?

Reflection: It is so easy to surround ourselves with those who think like us, behave like us, and believe what we do. Does this properly model the Gospel of Grace? What are the biggest challenges for you as you work this through? What are the dangers that you fear?